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Bard

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Come back from India and almost know me.
Strange smokes have littered your sinuses
with green dreams, strange foods recruited
your molecules to alien fields. Now you
belong to where that rice grew. Miles wide
the River through the poorest land. Minds
awake in deserts, nothing to be aware of
but awareness itself. After my body left me
I was a song easily mistaken for an idle wind
in the cleft of a red rock, whistling. Empty
quarter they called me where I let music
know my mind, replace my mind.
Nothing on earth left but that lean sound.

27 August 2010

STRUCTURES

One is the boring ordinary house
we all live in. The other
is impossible, nothing works,
all wrong angles, joints don't fit.

But it sings to be inside it,
illicit music, maybe, criminal
harp strings, roofbeam drone,
attic full of midnight, cellar
full of light. Wrong, wrong.

But here we live full of clean fire,
interesting danger, lion's mouth
roars near but how beautiful the beast's
haunches.

 This curious geometry
is part of our souls, the unnatural
that loves us, the unexpected joy,
living life in the wrong house.

27 August 2010

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Thin sheets of transparency
like glass but not glass. Just light.
But you can cut your fingertips on light,
be careful. Lift them into place
to make a box: four walls, a floor,
a pitched roof simple as Ohio
and it all falls easily together. Now
hoist it, leave it hanging in mid-air.
It is a house now, your house.
I dare you, walk the transparent floor,
gaze up at stars through the transparent roof—
look different, don't they? Cassiopeia
sits on a neon throne, seven colors
pour from her lap. And cold Orion
has his belt on fire, blazing at the tip,
and he seems to be aware of you
staring up at him, your face nobly tilted.
Any house is a miracle, and this one
a forest of the unexpected. Nothing to see
but the way you see, the alchemy of
ordinary eyes turns things into themselves.
And you are with them, fine bones,
lucid skin, calm knowing, one more secret.

27 August 2010

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They talk their hurt
secret as wet leaves
in woods at night

sometimes saying so
makes it hurt less
sometimes more

27.VIII.10

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Tree? Someone instead.

Who? A woman like a table
spread. *Shulchan Aruch*.

But she is dead, years ago,
her hips are in heaven.

Then who is that over there
in the moonlight? You were
right the first time, it is a tree.

27 August 2010

(end of NB 328)

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Haunted by the houses
you built in a dream.
Weird angles made a castle.

I move in. I wait
in a very big airy room.
I wait a long time
until the room is mine.

The one I wait for
could be anyone. Who
comes into the shadowy
room and brings light.

You know what a house
means, it means language,
the special kind of knowledge
that means love, the love
the saints call our *conversation*—

a word that might mean turning
with one another always
to look at the same thing
then looking at one another,
turning away then turning back

at last.

Even if someone
comes and shatters it
we still have glass, in all
its myriads, its transparencies,
its million words. Anything
can happen in such a house.

27 August 2010

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Green for her
when autumn comes
a telegram from tawny
on the old-fashioned weather—

could time belong to me?
Could there be an actual after?

28 August 2010

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Music, even the merest,
is a murk in mind.

Compared at least
to something else.

What is that clean thing?

28 August 2010

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She was Polish and she smoked—
is that enough to make a dream?
And whatever I called him
the name was always wrong.

They come to be made love to
then they go, and here love
means all the things that happen
in the dark—language,
failed recognition, touch
deferred or almost. So that
waking is the last element of dream.

But still a dream. All this.
Don't think it's different now
because sunlight's on the grass
and nobody's smoking.
The sea is waiting, is rising
even as we speak, its time
pours in upon us.
Dream while you can.

28 August 2010

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To touch the nice part of the light
the part that has trees in it,
to be simple.

We are the world's
most complicated mechanism
built to achieve silence, simplicity.

28 August 2010

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Don't ever assume I don't assume.

From the shape of your body I infer
character as destiny, just like the Greeks.

First impression is the only truth—
why don't I ever listen?

28 August 2010

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Poor people,
caught in language,
language is supposed
to free you,
starting with itself.

28 August 2010

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The kilter of allness

in the blue of morning

the arrogance of number

on the plains of Shinar

how dare anyone be sure

or ever clear

the orchestra starts rehearsing

before the music comes

they need to know themselves

before they can know it

just like you and me

stranded in a waterless canoe

sure we could get out and walk

but where would the Form

be then, the meaningful, telos, the goal?

And Form is God.

28 August 2010

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Just to be any we need all, *capisce*?
I know it isn't Brooklyn anymore
or even Italy, but you know what I mean
and from the look of you better than I do.
Help me rinse the Bible. Revise.
Start by sitting quiet on this rock.
Your soft and its hard are all we need.
And I have nothing but the wanting to.

28 August 2010

SOLILOQUY FOR A PATRIARCH

I know enough to need
not enough to know how
but answers are everywhere
after all, a new grammar
every day and why not?
Christians and Jews on one side
pagans on the other
and the Fairies in between
their tender laughter
at our ancient evasions
of the simplicity of earth.
Come back and touch me
before I am too old to feel.

28 August 2010

FAIRIES

*They're coming back now, I think,
they sing all our certainties away.*

The Fairies are not pagans—don't make that mistake. They are from before pagans, if pagan means the people of the plowed fields who worship sun or tree or bear, river or thunder, who have gods they can name and tell stories about, beautiful stories, gods they make offerings to, sometimes terrible offerings of living beings.

Fairies are before all that. To some extent they may have guided the young pagans to some of those practices, the sweeter ones, at any rate. But Fairies have no gods, and are not gods. They are the ones who have always been here. They are the ones who know. Or almost know. Certainly they know this place and how to live in it.

That much at least I can tell you, they put it in my mind when someone brought them into the conversation. Fairies live intensely, reverent towards everything that exists, but laugh a little, they can't help it, at our belief systems. Otherwise, human behavior they look tenderly upon, silly as we can be, and they help us when they can. They are said to flee churches, and that is so, but not because they fear some potent sanctity; they flee from boredom. All our -logies bore them, maybe theology most of all. Because it comes so close and misses so far? That I do not know. They rush out of chapels (congenial enough at night, cool stone dimness) and play in the churchyard, marveling at the hardness of stone, the ivory beauty of old bone,

the way lichen and time erase the names and legends of the dead. They listen to the distant beat and wheeze of the organ, the beautiful voices of women and children singing nonsensical hymns inside. And they are happy, as they are happy in the lifting wind, with the moon forgetting a cloud.

We Irish tell stories of seeing –or hearing from those who have seen— funerals of Fairies, mourners passing along middle-night lanes, and let no one dare speak to them or call out. So we imagine that Fairies must die, just like us, just like everyone. Unless our storytellers mistook the event, taking an unfamiliar ceremony as one all too familiar to us. Perhaps those who tell such stories were witnessing some other transition. It is not certain. Maybe the Fairies were mourning the death of a friendship, a cat who ran away and never came home, some words that could not find a song.

28 August 2010

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Beginningness. Meet
the word halfway.
Melt the mistake.
Spire so tall above
an abandoned church.
Has the beginning
even yet begun? Nobody
knows what kilter means,
only when it isn't on.

28 August 2010

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Start a new religion

every day.

Call it the Sun

and think about it till it sets.

Dusk now.

Soft gloaming and you're free.

28 August 2010

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Day game after night game.
Story of my life. Baseball
was only the beginning.
The failure of meaningful
pause, you might call it.
But you don't call it anything,
you're not even here
to do the calling. Or the other
things I need done to know
how to go on. It all does,
it all goes on and goes me
with it. But what am I up to
while it hurries us all along?

28 August 2010